

Serial No. 10/531,219
Atty. Doc. No. 2002P14335WOUS

REMARKS

Claims 13-20 and 22-26 remain in the application after amendment herein. All of the claims were rejected under Section 112, but the above amendments address all bases for such rejections and it is submitted that the claims are now sufficiently definite to satisfy the requirements of Section 112. Claims 13, 15-21, 23 and 25-26 were rejected under Section 102 based on Wustman (US2005/0161439) while claims 14 and 24 were rejected over Wustman under Section 103. Further, claim 22 was rejected under Section 103 based on Wustman over Fusnocht (U.S. 3,532,591). Finally, all of the claims were rejected under Section 103 over Evans (U.S. 6,544,002) in view of Dohogne (U.S. 3,546,084) and further in view of Martinou (U.S. 4,707,191) or Fusnocht. Applicants respectfully request allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks which establish patentable distinctions in the claimed subject matter.

The rejections under Section 102 based on Wustman do not apply to the claims as now presented because the invention of claim 13 is not directed to mere removal of an overlay coating having the composition MCrAl(X) as disclosed in the prior art. Rather, applicant presents a method relating to removing components of a layer system that include a ceramic thermal barrier coating. This is simply not the same as removal of an overlay coating. Notably, claim 13 now requires in the stated combination of steps a mechanical operation to facilitate removal of the ceramic thermal barrier coating. The Wustman reference does not at all relate to provision of a mechanical operation to facilitate removal of the ceramic thermal barrier coating. Thus further reference to paragraphs 46 and 77 of Wustman would be improperly taken out of context. Applicants also urge that the Examiner's suggestion of water being inherently an oxygen donor lacks support. There is no disclosure in the reference to suggest that the oxygen component of water would become available as a donor. If the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is requested to provide support for this questionable inherency.

The Examiner has also applied Fusnocht in the Section 103 rejection of claim 22 because some solutions of NaOH contain NaO which may provide an oxygen donor. Applicants submit that in view of the positive recitations now present in claim 13, requiring that the donor be

Serial No. 10/531,219
Atty. Doc. No. 2002P14335WOUS

added, this is not a sufficient basis for rejection. Further, there is no basis to conclude that the NaOH of the Wustman disclosure is intended to include NaO as an impurity. This is only speculation. It is only the applicants who teach *adding* an oxygen donor to the salt bath so as to boost chemical attack on the bonding layer.

With regard to the rejections of all of the claims under Section 103 over Evans (U.S. 6,544,002) in view of Dohogne (U.S. 3,546,084) and further in view of Martinou (U.S. 4,707,191) or Fusnocht, applicants submit that the Examiner's combinations fail to meet the terms of the claims for the same reasons that Wustman is now deficient for rejecting the claims under Section 102. The requisite combination does not exist in the rejections. By way of example, the Section 103 combinations based on Evans do not disclose or suggest a removal method applicable to ceramic thermal barrier coatings applied over a substrate layer with a bonding layer between the ceramic coating and the substrate layer. Nor does the combination provide a mechanical operation to facilitate removal of the ceramic thermal barrier coating.

Applicants also acknowledge the provisional double patenting rejection made in this application in relation to the related, later filed, application number 11/502,487. In view of amendments to claims in one or both of these applications, the basis for the provisional rejection must be reassessed. As needed, applicants will address this double patenting rejection.

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Serial No. 10/531,219
Atty. Doc. No. 2002P14335WOUS

Conclusion

For all of these reasons, the claims in this application are allowable over the prior art and this application is in condition for allowance. The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, including the fees specified in 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 (c), 1.17(a)(1) and 1.20(d), or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 8/3/07

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